

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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The following statement in opposition to the Republican Constitutional amendment banning gay marriage can be attributed to Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA):

Mr. Speaker, oil prices are approaching \$50 a barrel, more than 1,000 young American men and women dead in Iraq, 6,000 wounded.

What are we debating here on the floor of Congress? We are taking up a bill to inject discrimination into the Constitution of the United States of America. Apparently, the Republican Congress believes that the fact that some states want to recognize the loving relationships of gay and lesbian couples is such a threat to our country that they are prepared to take the extreme measure of amending the Constitution.

Conservative activist Paul Weyrich shed some light on the current thinking in Republican circles which explains why this bill is really on the floor today. Here is what Mr. Weyrich had to say: ``The President has bet the farm on Iraq. Right or wrong, he has done it. Even if you disagree with the decision, you have to admire the President for putting it on the line and staying the course despite overwhelmingly bad news for months now.

``Therefore, Iraq will be an unavoidable topic of discussion in this campaign. The problem is that events in Iraq are out of the control of the President."

Mr. Weyrich writes, ``There is only one alternative to this situation: Change the subject." He dismisses the option of taking up oil prices or the economy. Apparently, even he does not think those are winners for the President.

``No," he concludes, ``what I have in mind to change the subject is a winner for the President. The Federal Marriage Amendment." The gay marriage issue, he gleefully advises, ``will cause Senator *Kerry* no end of problems."

So that is what it is really all about. Republican leaders in Washington are running scared. They look at the polls on Iraq, on the economy, on jobs and they fear that the voters are going to rise up in November and toss them out of office, and as a result they bring up a resolution to alter the most sacred document in the land.

The Constitution was written to ensure that all Americans are treated equally. This provision will undermine that principle and tarnish the Constitution. I believe that any state should have the right, if it so chooses, to grant same-sex couples or unmarried couples the same legal rights as

those conferred to heterosexual couples. This is the same policy supported by Vice President Dick Cheney who stated during the 2000 presidential election that same-sex marriages should remain a state issue and the federal government should recognize those state laws.

Vote ``no" on this bill. It is a disgrace against the United States Constitution.